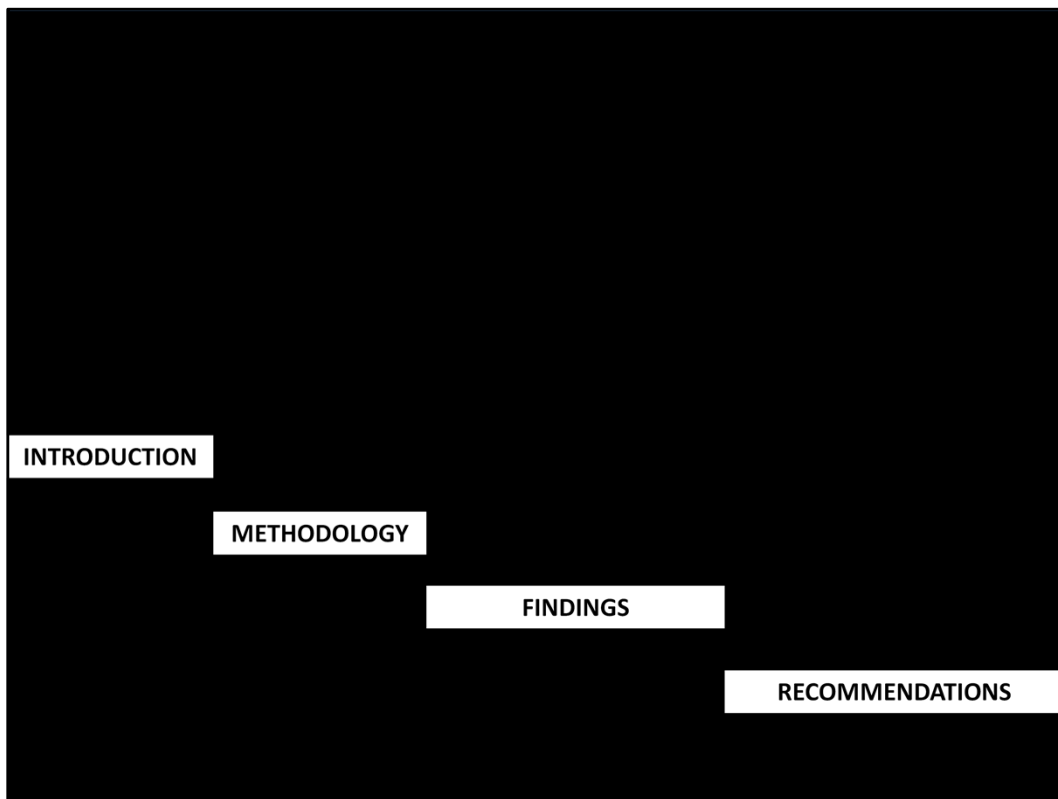


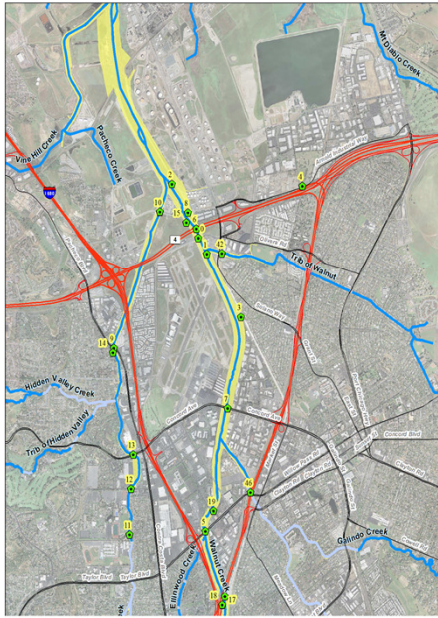
**Homeless Encampments in Contra Costa Waterways:**  
Regulatory Constraints, Environmental Imperatives  
and Humane Strategies

Introduction



Outline of Presentation

## INTRODUCTION: Definition of a problem



Last year, CCCFCD spent about 70,000 clearing and cleaning 78 camps. Many of these camps were resettled within days of being cleared. **62 of the 78 cleanups were in 3 sites.**



It is also the area where all of the abatements that CC has engaged in are situated.

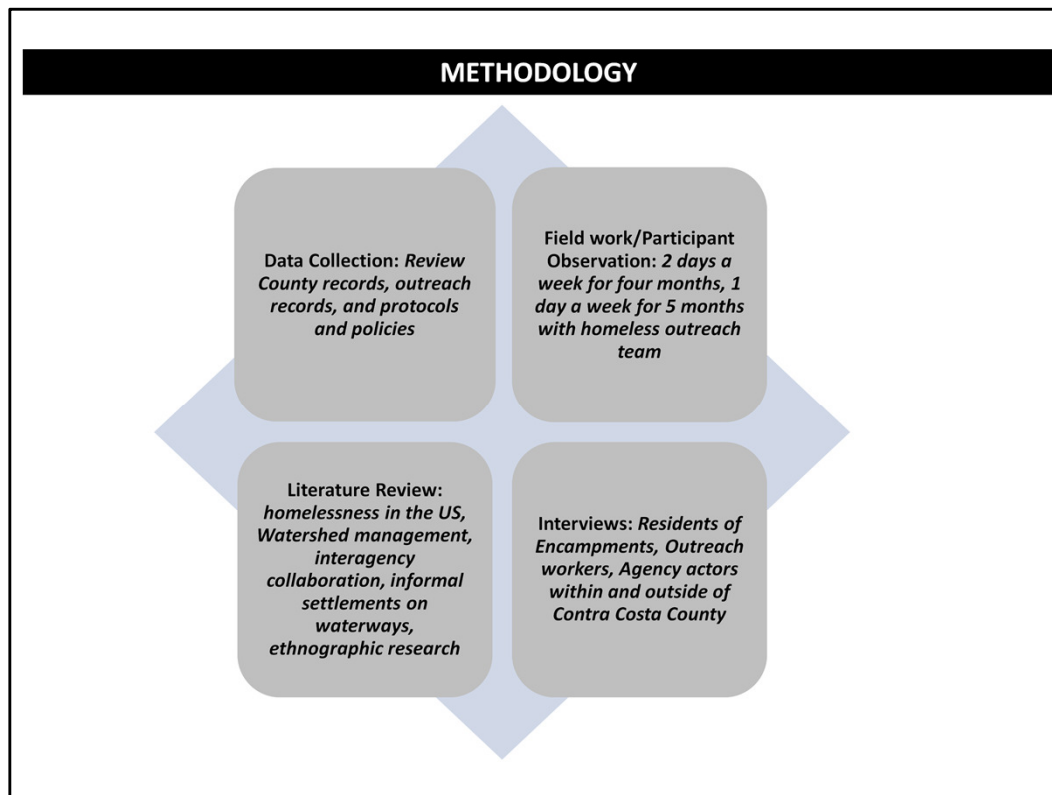
## **INTRODUCTION: Definition of a problem**

### **RESEARCH QUESTION:**

WHAT ARE VIABLE STRATEGIES FOR CONTRA COSTA COUNTY  
TO REDUCE WATER POLLUTION CAUSED BY HOMELESS  
ENCAMPMENTS IN A HUMANE MANNER,  
AND WHAT ARE THE INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS TO  
IMPLEMENTING THESE STRATEGIES?

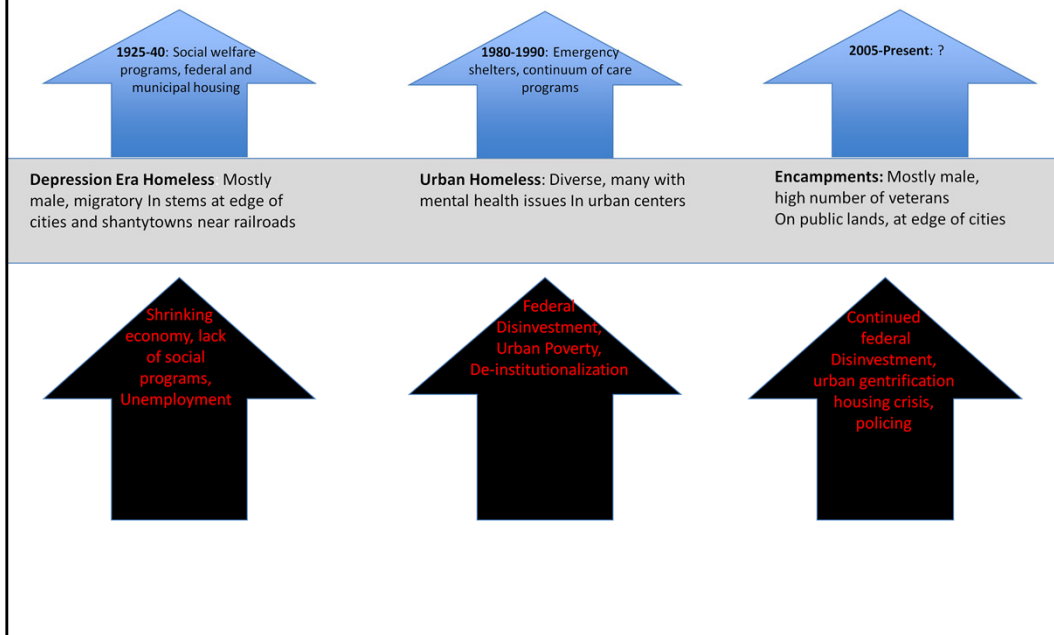


This is the final research question I came to.



The research process has been iterative, as I have learned more in one area, it has informed other aspects of my research and raised new questions, leading me to continually reformulate my methods. An effective strategy has to understand the root causes so part of my research has involved doing outreach with project hope, a homeless outreach team, engaging in informal interview in the encampments as well as in-depth interviews. I have also interviewed actors from the various agencies that interact with this population both within and outside of the county to understand how they view the issue and what policies and protocols are most effective. I have also researched the literature on homelessness, watershed management and governance.

## FINDINGS: History of Homelessness



## FINDINGS: Demographics of homelessness today

More than one in five of the nations' homeless reside in California. Four of the five cities with the largest number of unsheltered homeless are in California.



Demographics: Although there are some distinctions, it is worth noting that there are some patterns about the encampments populations that are true nationally and within Contra Costa. The primary distinctions being race and veteran status.

## FINDINGS: Major Typologies

Old-timer Camps



Newcomer Camps



Veteran Camps



These typologies are not exact and many people may fit in multiple categories at different times but the typologies describe in broad strokes the three types of camps that I have encountered and help predict something about who is living in these encampments and what policies would be most effective. I have named them veteran, old-timers and new comers but again this is a category that describes behavior and lifestyle so a resident of a new-comer camp may be a veteran or a resident of an old-timer camp may be recently homeless.

Oldtimer Camps:

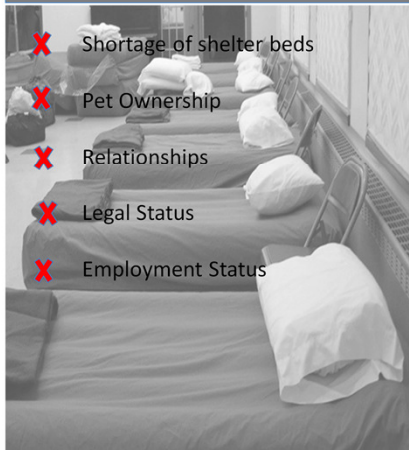
New Comer Camps:

Veteran Camps:



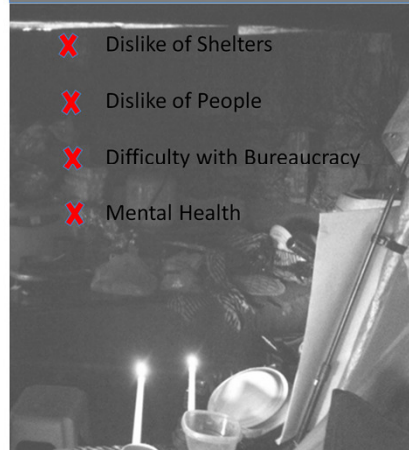
## FINDINGS: Impediments to Shelter

### Structural



- ✗ Shortage of shelter beds
- ✗ Pet Ownership
- ✗ Relationships
- ✗ Legal Status
- ✗ Employment Status

### Personal



- ✗ Dislike of Shelters
- ✗ Dislike of People
- ✗ Difficulty with Bureaucracy
- ✗ Mental Health

Impediments to Housing: Many housing advocates argue that lack of affordable housing is the root cause of homelessness but what I have learned from my interviews is that there are many impediments to housing the homeless, all of which would involve different policy solutions

### **FINDINGS: Qualities of a Good Camp**

**FENCED- SAFETY AND PLACE FOR ANIMALS**

**NEAR WATER OR HIGHWAYS- WHITE NOISE**

**UNDER BRIDGE OR OVERPASS- PROVIDES WEATHER PROTECTION**

**NOT VISIBLE FROM ROAD-AVOID DETECTION**

**REMOVED FROM CITY CENTER/RESIDENCES- AVOID PUBLIC SCRUTINY**

**NEAR LIGHT INDUSTRY/COMMERCIAL AREAS- SUPPLIES**

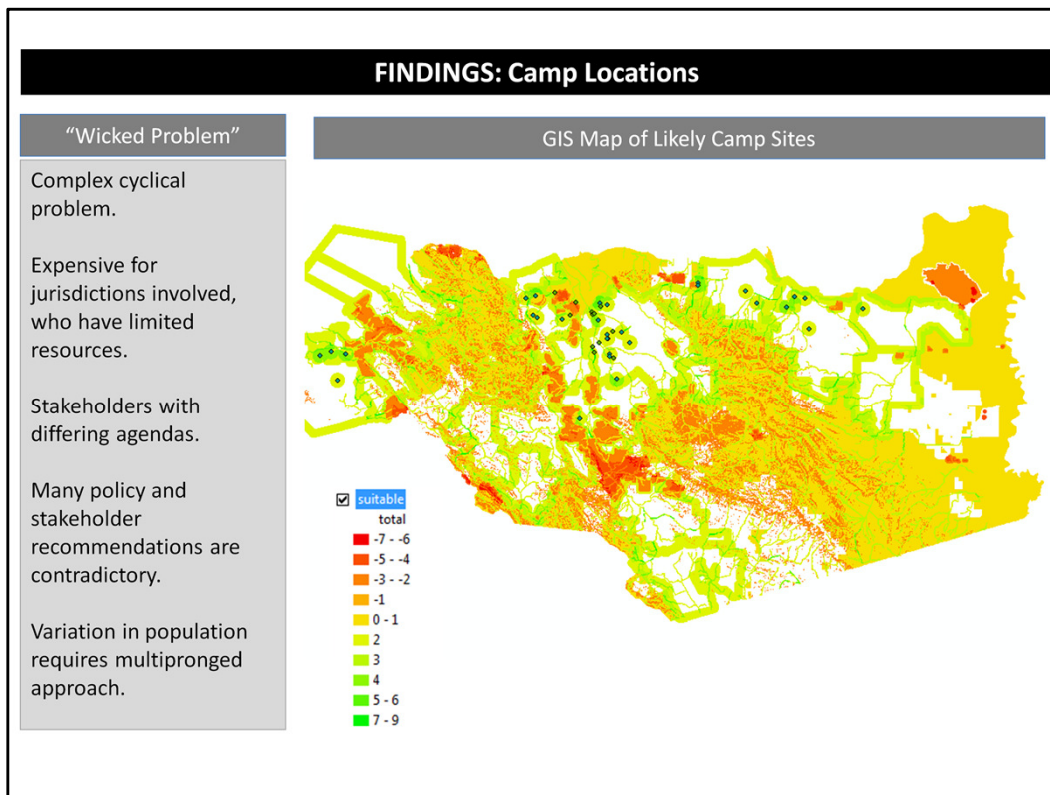
**NEAR SERVICES- ACCESSIBLE**

**NOT TOO POPULAR/STABLE POPULATION- LOWER RISK OF EVICTION**

**LOW FLOOD RISK- SAFE**

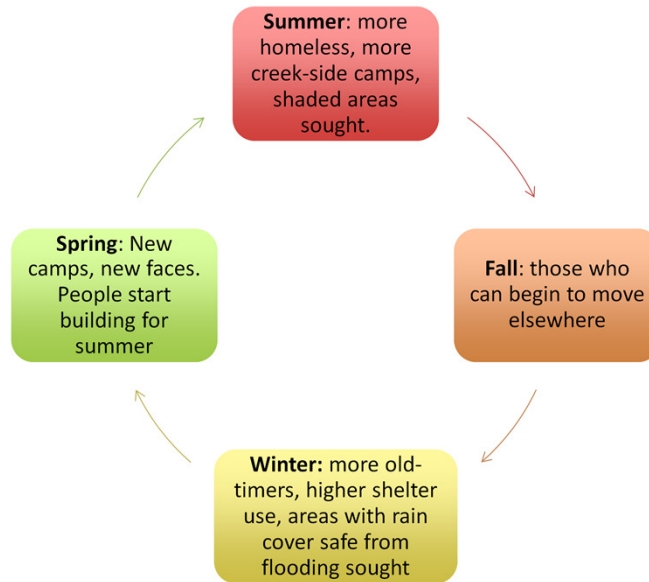
Residents of the camps have migratory patterns and range and locations that people move to are partly determined by the typology and partly by external influences including seasonal changes, capacity of location and agency interventions.

On the one hand it seems fairly intuitive that a good summer camp is not going to look like a good winter camp but knowing this can help anticipate the next encampment sites. We also know that many newcomer residents are happy to move into shelter when the weather gets cold but the shelters do not have enough space to hold them. Winter may want to have more outreach than summer where it would not be as effective.

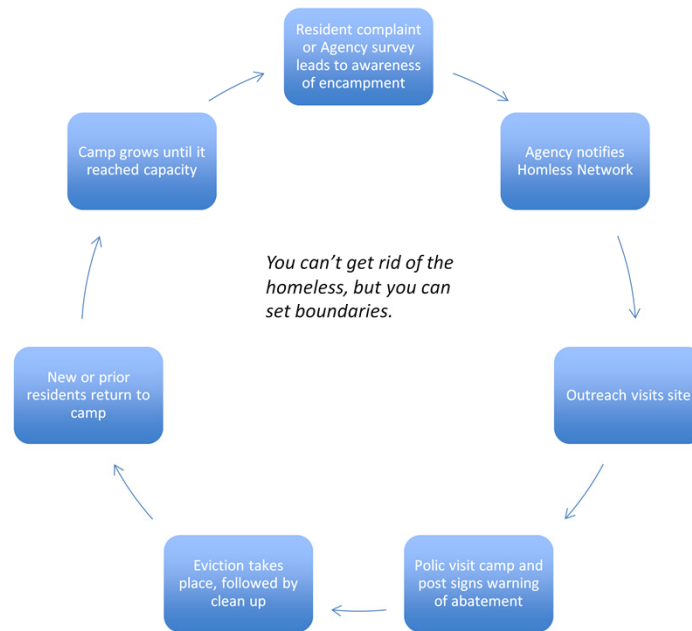


This map was created using the interviews and observations to create layers based on what qualities make an area a good camps you can see that all of the camps identified by CCCFCD and during outreach fall into the suitable camp areas.

## FINDINGS: Migratory Patterns



## FINDINGS: Agency Response



## RECOMMENDATIONS: Strategies

### Themes

Successful Collaboration with Homeless Outreach key.

Protocol utilized by all agencies interacting with the population.

Constraints cited included: jurisdictional complexity, funding, capacity, lack of consistency across agencies, lack of housing and services for the population, inadequate mental health or substance abuse services and legal constraints.



RECOMMENDATIONS: Analysis				
Intervention	Pros	Cons	Where would this work best?	Assessment
Garbage Collection	Creates Political Pressure	Needs local support	Old-timer camps	Should be a complementary strategy
Abatements	Prevents build up of garbage	Temporary results	Bad Camps	Should be a complementary strategy
Housing Vouchers	Effective	Expensive, will not work with some camp residents	All	Should be a complementary strategy
Landscaping	Creates local investment, can be better regulated	Less national, international scrutiny	Urban or Semi-Urban Areas where community has access	Has potential
<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Creates Political Pressure</b>	<b>Takes time and effort</b>	<b>Semi-urban or rural areas where community is invested and land is not too expensive</b>	<b>Most promising</b>

## QUESTIONS?



Thank you CCCFCD and Project Hope

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